Bangabandhu Bangladesh

Venue: Sher-e-Bangla Nation-

Premier League

Sylhet v Rajshahi

Time: 6:30pm

al Stadium, Dhaka

Time: 1:30pm

Chattogram v Khulna

Leicester v Wigan

Live from 11:30pm

South Africa v England Second Test, Day One Live from 2:30pm FA Cup Man City v Port Vale

Live from 11:30pm FA Cup Rochdale v Newcastle Live from 6:30pm **Fulham v Aston Villa**

Live from 9:00pm **Wolves v Man United** Live from 11:30pm

Bashundhara Kings players celebrate one of the three goals they scored against Bangladesh Police in their Federation Cup semifinal encoutner at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Bashundhara ensure back-to-back finals



Bashundhara Kings made it to their second consecutive final of the TVS Federation Cup after with a 3-0

win against promoted Bangladesh Police FC in the second semifinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The defending champions of Premier League will play Sunday's final against minnows Rahmatganj MFS, who ensured their first-ever final in any tournament of top-flight football by beating Mohammedan in the first semifiinal on Thursday.

Bashundhara though Kings had to dig deep to see off Muktijoddha Sangsad in tiebreaker in the quarterfinals, they had it easy against Police, dominating the game right from the beginning on the rainsoaked pitch.

Bashundhara Kings coach Oscar Bruzon started the game without his Lebanese marksman Jalal Kdouh, who had scored two goals in last three matches. The Spaniard pushed winger Daniel Colindres upfront, and the Costa Rican World Cupper set up one goal in the first half before scoring the team's second goal after the break while Argentinian Nicolas Delmonte wrapped up the victory in stoppage

However, it was Bangladesh Police who had the first shot on target, with Antonio Laskov forcing Bashundhara Kings goalkeeper Anisur Rahman to a fine save from a free-kick in the ninth minute.

POLICE 0-3 BASHUNDHARA KINGS

Bashundhara Kings took the lead in the 17th minute when Khan Mohammad Tara brought down Colindres inside the box, with Tapu Barman converting the spot-kick, giving some 2000 supporters a cause to cheer.

The beaten finalists of last season took full control of the game after the break and created some good chances before Colindres doubled the lead with a powerful shot which brushed the hands of Police goalkeeper Arifuzzaman Himel in the 50th minute.

Five minutes later, Kyrgyz defender Artur Muladzhanov made a goalline save to deny Bashundhara Kings from extending the lead while Tapu saw his header from inside the six-yard box miss the target by a few yards.

Bashundhara Kings wrapped up the victory in the stoppage time, with Delmonte smashing a left-footer into the near post after dancing past three defenders.

"We understood the game from the beginning and the difference was the turf, which was a bit wet and unfit for playing one-touch football. We tried to play in their half and holding Nicolas in between their two foreign forwards and it worked really well," Bruzon said after the match.

Bangladesh Police coach Nikola Vitorovic felt they gifted all three goals owing to mistakes of defenders.

"It was a tough game for us because I have played the same players with a short period of rest. had to change my plan due to overnight rain and played long ball which did not suited us. But I'm still proud of our boys because it was a historical moment for Police to play in the Federation Cup semifinal," the Cypriot coach said.

Stojkovic leaves Guangzhou

REUTERS, Hong Kong

Guangzhou R&F have announced the departure of Dragan Stojkovic from his role as head coach at the Chinese Super League club by mutual consent on Friday.

Stojkovic spent four-and-a-half seasons in Guangzhou after replacing Cosmin Contra midway through the 2015 season, when he helped R&F avoid relegation to China League One, the second tier of Chinese

football. In his first full season, Stojkovic led the club to a sixth place finish and improved on that in 2017 when R&F finished fifth, just missing out on a place in the Asian Champions League.

However, R&F struggled over the last two seasons of Stojkovic's tenure despite the goal scoring exploits of Israeli forward Eran Zahavi, who finished as the league's top marksman in 2019.

Zahavi set a new Chinese Super League record with 29 goals in 28 games last year but R&F could only finish 12th, prompting the club to seek a replacement for the former Yugoslavia international midfielder.

Chinese media reports have linked former Barcelona and Arsenal defender Giovanni van Bronckhorst with the now vacant post.

Ibrahimovic up for the challenge at Milan

AFP, Milan



Swedish star Ibrahimovic warned Friday he was not back at AC Milan as a mascot but for the "last bit of adrenaline" and to lift a club he loved out of a difficult situation.

"I'm not here as a mascot to dance for the fans next to the Devil (Milan mascot)," the 38-year-old told a press conference in Milan.

"I'm looking for the last bit of adrenaline I might have. At my age you're not looking for anything else but a challenge. "When you're 38 and get hired by

AC Milan it's something that doesn't happen very often, coming here means I still have something to give. "I got more requests now than when I was 28," he continued.

"I am ready, I feel more than alive, I hope to play immediately."

Ibrahimovic has signed a sixmonth contract worth 3.5 million euros (\$3.9 million) with the option for an additional year.

It will mark the Swede's second stint with Milan, seven years after he left for Paris Saint-Germain.

He played for the Rossoneri from 2010-2012 scoring 56 goals in 85 appearances and helped the club win their 18th and last league title in One of the most successful clubs in

the world the seven-times European champions are 11th in the table just seven points above relegation.

Milan chief football officer Zvonimir Boban contacted the Swede after he left Los Angeles Galaxy in October and the calls intensified after a 5-0 loss to Atalanta last month, their heaviest defeat in 21 years.

of calls, it wasn't a difficult decision metres," he smiled.

in the end," continued Ibrahimovic. "Last time I left Milan I didn't want Malmo in his native Sweden. to leave. Milan gave me the happiness of playing soccer, I hope this will be true again.

"Things need to be improved in the field and that's why I'm here. "Milan is always AC Milan and

the image of ACM is something that cannot be deleted, you can't change

Ibrahimovic said that going to

Ibrahimovic started his career at

He went on to play for Ajax, Juventus, Inter, Barcelona, Milan, PSG and Manchester United, winning trophies with all these clubs.

But Boban warned that the club would not just be counting on

"We can't forget the horrible and unacceptable defeat at Bergamo, but we must not hide behind the broad



Zlatan Ibrahimovic holds aloft his AC Milan jersey alongside club legends Paolo Maldini (L) and Zvonimir Boban (R) during his official signing at Casa Milan on Friday.

the United States after his careerthreatening knee injury at Manchester United had refuelled his passion.

"After two MLS championships I feel more than lively," he said.

"It's not that I can play like when I was 28 or 35, things change but you know what you can do. Rather than "After Atalanta I got lots and lots running you can kick a ball from 40

shoulders of Zlatan Ibrahimovic,' said Boban

"We hope the course of the season will change and are optimistic about the effect he will have on the team and the environment but we need results.

AC Milan's first game after the winter break will be at home against Sampdoria on Monday.

Liverpool go a year unbeaten

AFP, Liverpool



Jurgen Klopp hailed "exceptional" Liverpool League after they made it an

entire calendar year without a Premier League defeat as the runaway leaders beat Sheffield United 2-0 on Thursday.

Klopp's side moved 13 points clear of second placed Leicester thanks to goals from Egypt forward Mohamed Salah and Senegal winger Sadio Mane

Liverpool's 19th win in 20 league games this season completed an incredible 12 months for a team at the peak of their powers.

The Reds ĥaven't lost in 37 league games since a defeat at Manchester City on January 3, 2019 and it looks certain they will win the English title for the first time since 1990.

With a game in hand to further bolster their advantage, it would take an astonishing collapse to deprive Liverpool of their holy grail.

"It says a lot of positive things. I have not enough words for it, it is

exceptional," Klopp said. "I'm really happy and really proud of the boys. We should not take things like

this for granted.' Winners of their last 18 home league games, Liverpool are unbeaten in 51 top-flight matches at Anfield dating

back to April 2017. As if it wasn't hard enough to beat Liverpool already, they are proving more impregnable than ever lately.

This was their fifth consecutive topflight clean-sheet -- the first time they have managed that since 2007 -- and they completed more passes than any team in one match in the Premier League era.

United was exceptional. In possession

lively as well. The goals we scored were exceptional," Klopp said. "It's obviously good (to go unbeaten

for a year) but the target was not to extend this, but to win the game. "We did not think about the one

year (undefeated). We have season resolutions, not New Year resolutions!"

After a golden 2019 saw Liverpool crowned European and Club World champions, the next target is ending Manchester City's two-year spell as champions after narrowly missing out last season. Their sights set on domestic bliss,

the new year started just as the old one finished, with Liverpool setting standards of excellence that rival anything achieved by City's breathtaking team.

Premier League immortality is within touching distance as Klopp's men are already over halfway towards an unbeaten league season that would replicate the incredible feat of Arsenal's 2003-04 Invincibles.

Liverpool hadn't even kicked off when they suffered what could have been a distracting blow as Naby Keita was replaced by James Milner after being injured in the warm-up.

But the Reds are far too polished to lose focus and they were in front within four minutes.

Their win at Bramall Lane in September had come thanks to a mistake from United keeper Dean Henderson and once again Liverpool benefitted from a Blades blunder.

When Virgil van Dijk played a long pass towards Andrew Robertson, it should have been easy for George Baldock to deal with.

But Baldock lost his footing and fell over, allowing Robertson to advance and cross low to Salah, who got in front of Jack O'Connell to steer in a clinical close-range finish for his 14th goal of

The way we controlled Sheffield the season. we were incredible, we were calm but

Mourinho fears bad news on Kane injury

REUTERS, London



Hotspur Tottenham Premier manager Jose Mourinho League fears bad news about the hamstring injury that forced striker Harry Kane to hobble off

during his side's 1-0 defeat by Southampton in the Premier League on Wednesday. Kane, scorer of 27 goals for Spurs and England this season, pulled up late in the second half after having a goal disallowed

and left the ground on crutches. He will definitely miss Tottenham's FA Cup third-round clash at Middlesbrough

on Sunday. "We don't know yet, but I think later today we will have news," Mourinho told a new conference on Friday.

"But if you ask me for my feeling, good news or bad news, I am more on the bad news than the good news, that's my feeling. What he felt, leaving the match, the way he did it, it took him only two seconds to realise the severity of the situation.

"Some opinions from the medical department before he has all the tests, I don't think we will have good news. I think

we will lose him for some period." Kane has been injury-free this season but has had several layoffs in the last few seasons because of ankle problems.

Hamstring injuries vary in their severity but typically a tear could result in around month on the sidelines.

It would be a major blow to Tottenham who are six points behind fourth-placed Chelsea after mediocre results at Christmas. "His quality, the routines we have for

him, every minute of every game he doesn't play we will miss him," Mourinho said. "But I don't want to be crying all the time, want to focus on the players available." The good news for Mourinho is that forward Son Heung-min will be back from suspension for the trip to Middlesbrough

after missing three games following a red

card against Chelsea.

Ghana FA fires coaches of all teams

REUTERS, undated

banned for life by FIFA.

Ghana's Football Association (GFA) has sacked the coaches of all their men's and women's national teams, the country's governing body has said.

The GFA did not give a reason for the move but its president Kurt Okraku, who was appointed in October, promised to "build a new association" following allegations of bribery and corruption in a documentary filmed by an investigative journalist.

It brings to an end Kwesi Appiah's second reign as the national team coach. He was appointed a second time in 2017 following a two-year stint between 2012-2014.

Under Appiah, Ghana failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup after playing in the three previous editions and were eliminated in the second round of the Africa Cup of Nations last year -- their earliest exit since 2006. "The Ghana Football Association has dissolved the

technical teams of all national teams with immediate

effect. The decision affects both male and female national teams," it said in a statement released late on Thursday. The country decided to dissolve its national football association in 2018 after a recording in the documentary appeared to show officials, including the body's then president Kwesi Nyantakyi, taking kickbacks. Nyantakyi, also a former member of FIFA's General Council, was later



Liverpool's two goalscorers -- Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane - celebrate their first goal against Sheffield United at Anfield on Thursday night.

PHOTO: REUTERS